

California Native Plants that Attract Butterflies

Regional Parks Botanic Garden – East Bay Regional Park District

This list of California native plants that attract butterflies was compiled by the late Es Anderson, a dedicated Botanic Garden volunteer who managed the annual plant sale for many years. The list was further divided into those plants that attract nectar-feeding adult butterflies and those that provide food for butterfly larvae by Judy Lundy, a lepidopterist and naturalist devoted to sharing her love of nature with school children.

PLANT NAME	NECTARING SPECIES	LARVAL FEEDERS
<i>Achillea</i> (yarrow)	almost all butterflies	
<i>Aesculus californica</i> (California buckeye)	western tiger swallowtail, echo blue	
<i>Alnus</i> (alder)		western tiger swallowtail, pale swallowtail
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i> (pearly everlasting)		painted lady, American painted lady
<i>Arabis</i> (rock cress)		sara orangetips
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> (manzanita)		brown elfin
<i>Aristolochia californica</i> (California pipevine, Dutchman's pipe)		pipevine swallowtail
<i>Armeria</i> (sea pink, sea thrift)	skippers, blues	
<i>Asclepias</i> (milkweed)	red admiral, western tiger swallowtail	monarch, queen
<i>Aster</i> (aster)	west coast lady, painted lady, checkerspots, gray hairstreak, cabbage white, buckeye, skippers, coppers	
<i>Betula</i> (birch)		tiger swallowtail, western tiger swallowtail, mourning cloak
<i>Brodiaea</i> (brodiaea)	swallowtails	
<i>Calycanthus occidentalis</i> (western spicebush)		brown elfin
<i>Ceanothus</i> (California lilac)	Buckeyes	brown elfin, echo blue, California tortoiseshell, pale swallowtail

PLANT NAME	NECTARING SPECIES	LARVAL FEEDERS
<i>Cercocarpus</i> (mountain mahogany)		gray hairstreak
<i>Clarkia</i> (farewell-to-spring)	skippers	
<i>Cornus</i> (dogwood)	echo blue	echo blue
<i>Epilobium</i> (or <i>Zauschneria</i> – California fuchsia)	anise swallowtail	
<i>Erigeron</i> (fleabane daisy)	blues	
<i>Eriogonum</i> (California buckwheat)	skippers, acmon blue, dotted blue, buckeye, green hairstreak, gray hairstreak, metalmarks	skippers, acmon blue, dotted blue, buckeye, green hairstreak, gray hairstreak, metalmarks
<i>Eriogonum latifolium</i> (coast buckwheat)	Lange's metalmark	Lange's metalmark
<i>Grindelia</i> (gumplant)	coppers, skippers	
Grasses (e.g., <i>Muhlenbergia</i> , <i>Festuca</i>)		common wood nymph, California ringlet, skippers
<i>Holodiscus</i> (cream bush, ocean spray)		pale swallowtail
<i>Lavatera assurgentiflora</i> (island mallow)		west coast lady
<i>Lotus scoparius</i> (deerweed)		blues - including acmon blue, alfalfa butterfly
<i>Lupinus</i> (lupine)	painted ladies, skippers, gray hairstreak	blues - including Melissa blue, common blue, silvery blue, acmon blue
<i>Malacothamnus</i> (bush mallow)	buckeye, red admiral	painted ladies, skippers, gray hairstreak, common hairstreak, buckeye, west coast lady
<i>Mimulus</i> (monkeyflower)		buckeye
<i>Monardella</i> (monardella)	painted ladies, skippers, monarch, red admiral, western tiger swallowtail, anise swallowtail, gray hairstreak,	gray hairstreak, common hairstreak

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	common hairstreak	
<i>Penstemon</i> (beardtongue)	anise swallowtail	checkerspots
<i>Platanus racemosa</i> (western sycamore)		western tiger swallowtail
<i>Poa</i> (bluegrass)		fiery skipper, blues
<i>Populus</i> (cottonwood)		pale swallowtail
<i>Populus tremuloides</i> (quaking aspen)		twotailed swallowtail, western tiger swallowtail, mourning cloak
<i>Prunus</i> (wild cherry)		pale swallowtail, western tiger swallowtail
<i>Quercus</i> (oak)		California sister, duskywing, golden hairstreak, echo blue
<i>Rhamnus californica</i> (California coffeeberry)		pale swallowtail
<i>Rosa</i> (rose)	mourning cloak	
<i>Salix</i> (willow)		western tiger swallowtail; mourning cloak; Lorquin's admiral
<i>Salvia</i> (sage)	painted ladies, buckeyes, red admiral, monarch, pale swallowtail, common sulphur, silvery blue	
<i>Sedum</i> (stonecrop)	painted ladies, red admiral	elfins
<i>Solidago californica</i> (goldenrod)	gray hairstreak, common hairstreak, painted lady, red admiral, monarch	
<i>Symphoricarpos</i> (snowberry)		chalcedon checkerspot
<i>Vaccinium</i> (huckleberry)		blues, brown elfin